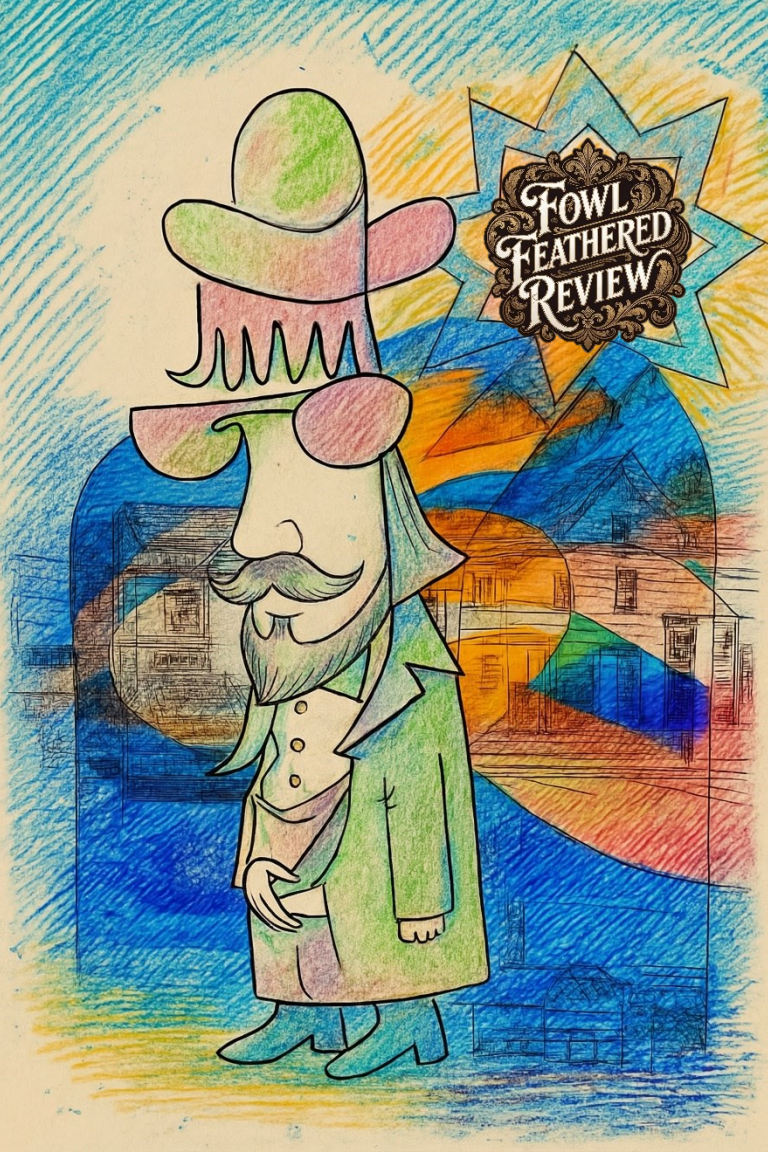

Fowl Feathered Review

ISSUE № 236: An NPR
Tiny Desk Concert tape reject

About the Assemblage

The FFR is no longer a journal or even a "Necrosign." It's a shared frequency—specifically the sound of a 1988 Mitsubishi Mirage idling in a parking lot at 3:00 AM. We don't curate; we just leave the back door unlocked. We are a collection of "important locals"—those who are durable because we are too tired to be fragile. If the work feels like it's trying to be "Art," we will likely use it to level a wobbly table.

The Staff (The Custodians of the Sink)

- Virgil Kay: Still the Final Arbiter, currently preoccupied with the aerodynamics of a falling bagel.
- Silent Bill: Promoted to *Chief of Tactical Non-Sequiturs*. He handles the "Necessary Pauses" by simply walking out of the room mid-sentence.
- Unkie Bob: Now specializing in *Casual Entropy*. He doesn't sabotage the structure

anymore; he just forgets to tighten the bolts.

- The Unnamed Dishwasher: (Not on the masthead). He just crashed in. He's wearing a windbreaker. He's currently scrubbing a scorched pot with the intensity of a man performing heart surgery. Don't look at him. He's the soul of the operation now.

THE PERPETUAL PENDING PLEDGE:

The Review is not for sale; it is freely given. All incoming funds are Sacramental Offerings consecrated not for service rendered, but to sustain the metabolically necessary Obsession8888. Our official registry is no longer numeric; it is an unassailable frequency defined as Vi · ∞ · 432Hz.

SUBMISSION PROTOCOL (CASUAL MODE)

1. The Work: Send us 2 to 953 fragments. They can be poems, paintings, or transcriptions of overheard arguments about bowling.
2. The Presentation: No "Cover Letters" listing your awards. We don't care where you went to school; we care if you can

stand up after taking a hit. Tell us your favorite type of industrial fastener instead.

3. The Offering: The Perpetual Pending Pledge remains. It's still free. But if you must send something, send a 12-inch sandwich.
    - The Kewpie Clause: If there is no Kewpie Mayonnaise on the sandwich, Virgil will use your manuscript to wipe the counter. Kewpie is the only thing standing between us and the "Absolute Cosmic-Cluck."
4. The Delivery: Drop it off. Or don't. The auction is never over, and we're just waiting for the next honk.

Note: If you hear the sound of dishes clattering in the back, ignore it. It's just the frequency of the house.

🐓Digital Park and Ride: Send to fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com

🐓Physical Park and Ride: 250.50∞ State Street, Bangor, Maine, 04401. *ERRATUM: If the 432Hz frequency sounds more like a rattling heat shield on a compact car, do not adjust your ears. The rattling is the poetry. The 9-volt battery is dead. Long live the 9-volt battery.*

"Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco."
— Virgil, The Aeneid

QUIET RAGE
WRESTLING
SHHH YOUR FEELINGS

Buoyancy

By Nikki Kolbe

Freddy Bubbles, the disco king of Bangor's tree streets, descended that morning in his signature polyester pantsuit — electric blue with subtle gold threading that caught the weak February light like a mirror ball remembering better nights. His bald head gleamed under the canopy of old maples where his boat-home hung suspended, a 26-foot cabin cruiser winched up years ago by that very winch he now used for clients (the kind advertised in marine circulars: Trusted Over 40 Years, toll-free 1-800-99-BYRNE, though Freddy preferred dramatic rappels to dramatic entrances).

He cooed as he touched sidewalk, one platform loafer kissing concrete with a soft *thwup*.

"Oooh... this looks funny," he murmured with delighted appraisal, head tilting, eyes widening in theatrical curiosity — not mockery, never mockery, but the fascinated joy of someone encountering a new species of possibility. "Darling... the air has *texture* today. Positively *murmurous*."

Sparrow waited at the base of the tree-ladder, arms crossed over a midriff that bore the real cargo: half a dozen enormous Yokohama boat fenders, the spherical pneumatic kind, black rubber orbs each roughly feet in diameter and pushing hundreds of pounds apiece once you counted the heavy chain-net slings that crisscrossed them like medieval chastity armor. She had rigged them around her waist and hips with marine-grade webbing and carabiners, a floating fortress of rubber that swayed when she shifted, creaking faintly, the tire-tread textures of their outer shells pressing dimples into her thrift-store maxi dress.

The weight bowed her slightly forward — low center of gravity, high existential drag — yet she stood defiant, if wobbly, in thrift-store combat boots.
"Freddy," she said, voice small. "I don't know about this."

Freddy circled her once, hands clasped behind his back like a curator appraising a found-object sculpture.

"Ooohhh, sweetness. Preciousness. Look at you. This silhouette — *architectural*. This is installation work. This is museum-adjacent."
"They're heavy," she said.

"Of course they're heavy," he replied warmly. "History is heavy. Protection is heavy. Transformation is *profoundly* heavy."

He tapped one of the rubber spheres. It gave a deep pneumatic *thum* like a distant foghorn.

"These are not mere bumpers. These are mythic orbs that have kissed freighters, buffered carriers, absorbed the cosmic *thump* of steel against steel. You wear endurance. You wear survival. And today..." — he inhaled dramatically — "...you wear *victory*."

He gestured toward downtown.

"The library is hosting their Live Amateur Wrestling Ringwar this afternoon. Mats in the periodicals aisle. Crowd-funded glitter. The theme is 'Quiet Rage.' You, my armored sparrow, are going to pin someone. Metaphorically. And literally."

Sparrow stared at the sidewalk.

"I can barely walk."

Freddy clapped once, sharp as a champagne cork.

"Exactly. The obstacle is the *point*. Desire meets gravity. Propulsion through contradiction. We do not shout rage. We *compress* it. You pin your opponent, you pin your doubt. Exquisite."

The straps dug into her ribs when she shifted. For a moment she wasn't here — she was thirteen again, fluorescent gym lights buzzing overhead, sneaker catching on the mat edge, her body pitching forward while classmates made those polite not-laughing sounds that were somehow worse than laughter.

Heat climbed her throat.

She inhaled.

The fenders shifted, rubber groaning like slow whales.

"Okay," she said quietly.

By two o'clock the library's community room had been rearranged: folding chairs in a loose square, a ring of yoga mats duct-taped together, a hand-lettered sign reading QUIET RAGE WRESTLING — SHHHH YOUR FEELINGS.

A small crowd — mostly locals who'd seen worse — murmured appreciatively as Sparrow waddled in, fenders clanking softly, each step a muted earthquake. Freddy sat ringside in a director's chair he'd rappelled in with, sipping from a thermos of something suspiciously cola-colored.

Her opponent was a wiry college kid named Theo who'd signed up for "performance credit." He blinked at the floating black spheres encircling Sparrow's torso.

"Uh... is that allowed?"

The ref — a circulation clerk with a whistle — shrugged.

"No rules against buoyancy."

The bell — actually a soft kitchen timer — dinged.
They circled. Slowly.

Sparrow felt every pound dragging at her hips. Sweat prickled under the straps. Her thighs trembled.

You're going to fall, a voice whispered.
Theo darted in for a leg grab; a fender swung, catching him in the shoulder like a slow-motion wrecking ball. He staggered.

The crowd made a collective hushed *ooooh*.

Freddy leaned forward.
"Yessss... feel the *resonance*..."

Theo tried again, more cautiously. Sparrow shifted her weight, and suddenly she felt something new — momentum. Not grace, not agility, but inevitability. The mass wanted to move. She just had to let it.

She leaned.

The spheres swung.

She toppled forward with intent.

They collided and went down in a rubbery tangle. Theo flailed; Sparrow rolled, the fenders pinning him like overinflated black planets.

He tapped once. Twice.
Then, quietly, from under the rubber:
"Honestly," he whispered, slightly breathless, "this feels... metaphorically correct."

The ref hesitated, then patted the mat.

“Winner by... gentle immobilization... Sparrow!”

The crowd went quietly wild — polite golf claps, a few whispered “yes,” someone mouthing “iconic.”

Then Frieda the librarian appeared for the rd time, cardigan buttoned to the throat, voice a library whisper sharpened to a blade.

“Yeah, hi. You’re totally nailing it. Really. But we have nursing mothers in the children’s section, and this is killing their chakra. Could you maybe... wrestle more quietly?”

Freddy raised a palm with diplomatic serenity.

“Darling Frieda. The soul requires volume.”
“Volume requires decibels under forty.”

So they restarted — quieter.

Sparrow and Theo circled in exaggerated slow motion, fenders barely brushing mats, contact reduced to symbolic taps. The crowd leaned in, straining to hear the soft squeak of rubber, the faint creak of chains, the almost inaudible *whump* of surrender.

Each round grew more hushed.

By the final fall, the room was silent except for breathing and distant children's songs leaking through the walls.

Sparrow won again — decisively, mutely.
For a moment she lay there, chest heaving, rubber spheres rising and falling with her breath. The weight was still heavy.

But it was hers.

The crowd erupted in the most restrained cheer possible: fingertips tapping palms, a single muffled "woo" swallowed immediately.

Freddy rose, arms wide, face radiant.

"Ohhh my darlings... quiet transcendence. The highest form."

Sparrow managed a small smile.

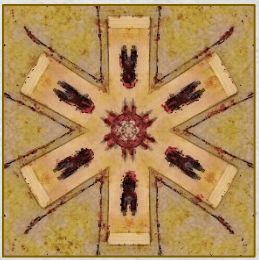
The fenders swayed once, then stilled — heavy, historic, oddly proud.

Freddy hurried over, already plotting.

"Next week we add strobe lights," he said. "Very low wattage. Chakra-friendly."
Somewhere above them, in the treetops, his boat-home waited, swaying gently, full of cola-bottle gummies shaped like tiny fizzing drinks — caramel amber at the bottom, clear at the top, each one a promise of refreshment suspended in gelatin time.

Freddy handed Sparrow one with ceremonial gravity.

“Hydration,” he murmured. “Always hydrate after transcendence.”
The happy world of Bangor.



AMO TE SEMPER

Amo Te Semper

By Joy Kickapoo

In the skewed Bangor Tree Streets universe—where the Penobscot keeps digesting the shelf at 432 Hz, the Mirage idles like a patient low-frequency prayer, and every street name is already an unmarked confession of what was cut down—the basement lab on Cypress Street never quite feels like a basement because the river's hum comes up through the floorboards the way a memory comes up through conversation.

[PANEL: Wide shot — Dr. Elias Wren, tiny figure between massive rows of pale turkeys, fluorescent tubes creating prison-bar shadows]

The birds tilt their heads in unison—a synchronized jury—the moment the synthesizer tone rises from the speakers.

One long chrome ribbon of vibration.

Refusing punctuation.

Borrowed from a battered cassette labeled PARIS SESSION.

The sound enters through their ear holes and exits through their feathers as visible dust motes, each particle a tiny manuscript floating toward extinction. A Styrofoam coffee cup on a folding table begins to

tremble, walking itself a millimeter at a time toward the edge as though gravity has received new instructions.
One turkey near the aisle carries a blue veterinary tag punched through the membrane of its wing. The plastic quivers like a tuning fork.
[CLOSE-UP: Turkey eye reflecting the fluorescent light, iris contracting to reveal Latin text spiraling in the pupil]
He wants proof before the grant evaporates. Before the landlord decides the electrical draw is a violation. Before the birds stop answering.
Proof in Bangor is just another thing the landlord can charge extra for.
Ridiculous men don't lose funding here; they lose the quiet permission to keep breathing the same fog everyone else breathes.
The poults strike the feed trays —
tack tack tack
— morse code for the end times — carving scratches that intersect until symbols emerge then phrases then pressure directly behind his eyes like electrical fingerprints.
AMO TE SEMPER
The words aren't on the tray.
They're in the unmarked space between the marked dust and the unmarked hum — the gutter where meaning breeds with itself.

A fly hits the fluorescent tube with a dry electrical tick — the sound of tiny death applause — and he rewinds the cassette because rewinding is the only motion that still feels like control.
Above him, reversed text floats in the dust:
ʎɹoɯǝɯ sı ɾsnp ǝɥʇ

Bangor, The Twitching Tail, and What We Demand of Creatures

By Jaku Jaksjargo

A meteor streaks above Bangor—
the sky splits open like a wound
with intention,
and below, in a kitchen where linoleum
has absorbed thirty years of small disasters,
a hen stands near the refrigerator.
Her tail begins.
That rapid tremor, the involuntary grammar
of the body announcing itself.
You must move quickly now.
The clicker in your hand—
that small plastic prophet—
waits to translate suffering into obedience.
Lift her. The warmth of feathers, damp
underneath. Earth in the box. Cat litter
from the shop, human convenience
pressed into service. She squats.
Heat leaves her body into the dust.

Reward.
Click. Click.
The shooting star doesn't know
it has already fallen.
It doesn't know Bangor. It doesn't negotiate
with gravity or with expectation.
But the hen learns.
Or doesn't. Some resist the architecture
we build for them—
the box, the sound, the treat,
the endless bargaining between
what she wants to do
and what we've decided
she should do instead.
By the third week she runs
at the whistle's suggestion.
By the fourth, perhaps, she understands
the litter box as her own necessity,
her own strange choice made real
through repetition
and the small mercies of consistency.
Above, the star completes its burning.
Here, she squats again.
Dust shifts. Feathers settle.
We reward her.
A click,
a treat,
and time.

BANGOR, MAINE — LAUNDROMAT ARCADE — NOON.
FZZZT!
WHIRRR!
THE FLIPPER KING
FLIPPER KING
FOR EVERY TILT... A RECKONING.
HIS MISSION: RESTORE JUSTICE TO THE PLAYFIELD.
TODAY... THE FINALS.
LET THE BALL RISE!
THWAK!
BOOM
BONK
DING! DING! DING!
I'M DEFEATED!
ANOTHER VICTORY.
THE PLAYFIELD IS SAFE..
BUT THE MULTIBALL GROWS RESTLESS...
FLIPPER KING

MISU
THE FREQUENCY KEEPER
ABSINTHE
PURRENE DIETRICH STYLE

The Panopticon Institute
FOR RECURSIVE INQUIRY
NOTICE
NO PUBLIC RESTROOMS THANK YOU
MEN

Dr. Wexler

THE PANOPTICON INSTITUTE FOR RECURSIVE INQUIRY

(Provisional Charter — Night Division)

"Perception Is a Corridor. We Lease Corridors."

LOCATION

The Institute meets in a rented instructional annex located on the third floor of 9 Central Street, downtown Bangor.

This floor is currently known for hosting evening burlesque and dance instruction classes operated by a local studio. The Panopticon Institute occupies the former men's restroom at

the end of the hallway, retrofitted with:
Folding chairs (three mismatched)
A rolling whiteboard with permanent marker scars
A humming beverage refrigerator of uncertain origin
A motivational poster depicting a wolf howling at what may be a satellite dish

Classes occur after burlesque sessions conclude and before the janitorial staff becomes suspicious.

The restroom plumbing fixtures have been respectfully capped with plywood. One urinal remains operational for historical reasons and advanced acoustics demonstrations.

A colorful third-floor studio space in this building has been used for burlesque and dance fitness instruction in recent years, reflecting Bangor's evolving arts scene. (Bangor Daily News [1])

INSTITUTIONAL STATUS

The Panopticon Institute for Recursive Inquiry is:
Not accredited
Not seeking accreditation
Philosophically opposed to accreditation
Registered in a jurisdiction that cannot be easily located on a map
The Institute operates under the doctrine of Epistemic Autonomy Through Improvised Infrastructure.

ADMINISTRATION

Founder and Acting Chancellor
Dr. Lionel P. Wexler, PhD (Unverified), DSc (Correspondence), CDL (Expired)
Dr. Wexler previously directed:
A mail-order philosophy seminary
A podcast network concerning epistemological anomalies
A short-lived museum of feral office equipment
He describes his mission as:
“Restoring wonder to research by removing institutional competence.”

COURSE OFFERING — SPRING TERM PANOPT 301

Recursive Weirdness: Animal Behavior, Cultural Artifacts, and the Collapse of Seriousness
Instructor: Dr. Wexler
Credits: 3 (metaphorical)
Meeting Time: Thursdays, 9:12 PM – 10:47 PM
Room: Former Men's Room (East Corridor)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary seminar examines:
Animal cognition experiments that sound fictional but are real

Anthropological oddities
Misinterpreted scientific seriousness
Low-rent museum artifacts
Literary scholarship of questionable urgency
Students will explore the boundary between knowledge and absurdity while learning to maintain composure when reading academic prose involving projectile excretion.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course students will:

1. Question the stability of civilization.
2. Recognize when an experiment has gone too far.
3. Maintain eye contact while discussing rats driving vehicles.

4. Develop professional tolerance for scholarly chaos.
5. Acquire conversational dominance at parties.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings must be purchased through the Institute photocopy service.
Photocopy Fee: $12.32 per article
Explanation of Fee: Toner volatility, paper inflation, existential overhead.
Failure to purchase readings results in moral disappointment.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 — Rats With Driver's Licenses

Neurobehavioral implications of rodent vehicle operation and emotional resilience.

Week 2 — Penguins and Ballistics

Fluid dynamics meets biology in uncomfortable ways.

Week 3 — Pigeons Versus Modern Art

Aesthetic perception without student debt.

Week 4 — Monkeys With Pharmacies

Self-medication and proto-medicine in primates.

Week 5 — Mouse Civilization Collapse

Population density, utopia, and the horror of abundance.

Week 6 — Confused Dolphins

Acoustic signals indicating uncertainty, possibly existential.

Week 7 — Silk Folklore and Mythic Fibers

Cultural symbolism of textiles and metaphysical thread anxiety.

Week 8 — Literary Scholarship Nobody Asked For

Close reading as endurance sport.

Week 9 — The Museum of Slightly Broken Objects

Institutional legitimacy versus duct tape.

Week 10 — Final Symposium

Students present research while instructor evaluates snack quality.

ASSIGNMENTS

Field Observation Report
Observe an animal doing something unexpected. Do not interfere unless legally necessary.
Artifact Analysis
Analyze a mundane object as if it were sacred.
Final Project
Produce either:
A research paper
A conceptual installation
A strongly worded manifesto

GRADING RUBRIC

Component | Weight
Participation | 30%
Assignments | 40%

Final Project | 30%
Bonus points awarded for bringing snacks.

FACULTY

Dr. Lionel P. Wexler
Founder, Chancellor, Senior Lecturer in Recursive Inquiry
Specializations:
Institutional loopholes
Improvised pedagogy
Interpretive overreach
Coffee procurement under constraints
Adjunct Lecturer (Visiting)
Ms. Misu
Certified Dance Fitness Instructor (Non-affiliated)
Teaches guest module:

“Embodied Knowledge and the Semiotics of Sequins”

STUDENT TESTIMONIES

“I came for the weird papers and stayed because I accidentally locked myself in the supply closet.”
— Mark D., Night Student

“This course changed how I think about pigeons and also municipal zoning law.”
— Renee P., Continuing Education

“The instructor said civilization is a temporary arrangement. I think he’s right.”
— Trevor L., Undeclared

“There was a feral stapler demonstration that I still don’t fully understand.”
— Anonymous (by request)

CAREER OUTLOOK

Men and women of America and the contiguous states are needed to fill jobs requiring skill and knowledge — skill and knowledge YOU will soon possess.

If you have:
Self-will
An eagerness to learn
And above all... MOXIE
...then the Panopticon Institute may prepare you for careers in:
Consulting
Cultural analysis
Podcasting
Museum interpretation
Government (possibly)
Situations requiring confidence without credentials

REQUIRED READINGS (CHICAGO STYLE — ALPHABETICAL)

Calhoun, John B. 1973. "Death Squared: The Explosive Growth and Demise of a Mouse Population." Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine 66 (1): 80–88.

Hunt, G. R., and Russell D. Gray. 2003. "Diversification and Cumulative Evolution in New Caledonian Crow Tool Manufacture." Proceedings of the Royal Society B 270 (1517): 867–74.

Pepperberg, Irene M. 1999. The Alex Studies: Cognitive and Communicative Abilities of Grey

Parrots. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Ramsey, Grant, and Kristin Andrews. 2013. "Animal Innovation Defined and Operationalized." Behavioral and Brain Sciences 36 (4): 393–407.
Skinner, B. F. 1948. "Superstition in the Pigeon." Journal of Experimental Psychology 38 (2): 168–72.
Waal, Frans de. 2001. The Ape and the Sushi Master: Cultural Reflections of a Primatologist. New York: Basic Books.
Weir, A. A. S., J. Chappell, and A. Kacelnik. 2002. "Shaping of Hooks in New Caledonian Crows." Science 297 (5583): 981.

Photocopy Charge: $12.32 per article

Payment Methods Accepted: Cash, check, barter, vintage postage stamps.

INSTITUTE MOTTO

“Reality is peer-reviewed by survivors.”